CHICAGO AND WESTERN INDIANA RAILROAD BRIDGE
(Belt Railroad of Chicago Bridge)
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Crossing Sanitary and Ship Canal
at Nerska Junction
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-79

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor

HAER No. IL-79

Location:	Crossing Sanitary and Ship Canal at Nerska Junction, east of Cicero Avenue Chicago, Cook County, Illinois UTM: 16 E.438680 N.4629950 Quad: Englewood
Date of Construction:	1898-1900
Builder:	Chicago & Western Indiana Railroad Bridge
Present Owner:	Belt Railroad of Chicago
Present Use:	Unknown
Significance:	This bridge is one of the seven surviving 1899 swing bridges built across the Sanitary and Ship Canal.
Project Information:	The Illinois and Michigan Canal was designated a National Heritage Corridor in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER embarked on an extensive inventory and documentation project of the 100 mile-long corridor. Field work for this project was concluded in 1988. Final editing of the documentation was completed in 1992.
Historians:	Frances Alexander and John Nicolay, 1986.

With the erection of this center-pivot, swing span bridge in 1900, the Chicago & Western Indiana Railroad was carried over the newly constructed Chicago Drainage Canal. Between 1898 and 1900, the Sanitary District of Chicago supervised the design of this and fourteen other movable highway and railway bridges crossing the Drainage Canal. Originally double-tracked, the bridge was later built to carry four tracks. Presently, the bridge is double-tracked and is operated as part of the Belt Railroad of Chicago.

Originally constructed as a center-pivot, swing bridge, the bridge is now a fixed span. The bridge measures 334'-6" in length. The superstructure consists of a pin-connected, steel Pratt through truss with eyebar tension members. Riveted plates and channel sections form the compression members. The tracks are carried on riveted, steel-plate, girder floor beams; originally, there was a four-track bridge with one set of tracks cantilevered on each side of the bridge outside of the truss panels. The two cantilevered tracks have been removed. The superstructure rests on ashlar limestone abutments. The stone center pivot, capped with concrete, measures 33'-8" in diameter and supports a 28'-0" diameter turntable that is no longer operable.

SOURCES:

"Bridges Over the Chicago Drainage Canal,: The Engineering Record, XXXVI (June 19, 1897): 53.

"Railway Drawbridges Over the Chicago Drainage Canal," Engineering News, XXXVIII (December 2, 1897): 363-366.

Isham Randolph, "The Salient Features of the Chief Engineer's Annual Report of the Drainage Canal of the Sanitary District of Chicago for 1898," Journal of the Western Society of Engineers, IV (August 1899): 317-334.

"Swing Bridges on the Chicago Drainage Canal," The Engineering record, XXXVI (October 30, 1897): 469; XXXVII (December 25, 1897): 71-73; XXXVII (March 19, 1898): 338-339.

C. Arch Williams, The Sanitary District of Chicago: History of its Growth and Development, (Chicago: the Sanitary District of Chicago, 1919).